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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

"War is the health of the state," observed critic Randolph Bourne, and that certainly has proven true for Florida. Historically, war has generated spurts of growth along the Gulf Coast. The city of Tampa owes its modern origins to the placement of Fort Brooke on the eastern bank of the Hillsborough River in 1823. The Seminole Wars begot Fort Harrison (Clearwater) and Fort Meade. The Spanish American War introduced thousands of soldiers to Tampa in 1898.

World War II profoundly changed the social and economic rhythms of Tampa Bay life. The most tangible evidence of change was the explosive growth of the military in Florida. On the eve of Pearl Harbor, Florida hosted only a handful of military establishments; by the end of the war the Sunshine State laid claim to 172 military installations. The Tampa Bay region became home to a variety of bases, ranging from mega-complexes, such as MacDill Army Air Field, to small installations, such as Camp Weatherford in Bradenton, Henderson Air Field in Tampa (near today's University of South Florida campus), and the Dunedin Marine Base.

This summer marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. The editors of *Tampa Bay History* commemorate the conclusion of that great conflict with an issue devoted entirely to the war and its impact on the region. In an article entitled "Tampa's MacDill Field during World War II," Abraham Scherr, a former MacDill Air Force Base historian, has written a profile of the war years at MacDill. Several articles speak to the role of women in war. In "For the Duration," Susan O'Brien Culp argues that the war changed forever women's roles. Culp examines the myriad challenges and opportunities brought by the war and met by women in Tampa and St. Petersburg. In "A Community within a Community," Ellen J. Babb writes about African-American women in wartime St. Petersburg. Acknowledging that traditional sources neglect the contributions of black women, Babb illustrates how historians can imaginatively use oral history and non-traditional sources to fill in this neglected chapter of our history.

World War II served as a bridge between a Jim Crow South and the modern civil rights movement of the 1960s. In "Crime and Racial Violence in Tampa during World War II," Catherine Fére examines the dynamics of crime and punishment as it related to African Americans in wartime Tampa, where legal battles against forced confessions and the white primary won the support of the NAACP and crusading lawyers such as Thurgood Marshall.

Finally, Tampa Bay's wartime experiences are captured in a photographic essay, "The Homefront on Florida's West Coast," which features images of the war, and "V-J Day Celebrations" looks at the end of the war.

Additional copies of this issue are available for purchase for \$9 each, and the editors hope readers will find this issue of sufficient interest to order copies sent to friends and relatives. You can send a check (made payable to *Tampa Bay History*) to the Department of History, USF, Tampa, Florida, 33620-8100. Or you can call 813-974-2807 for more information.